Source: https://dgrayman.livejournal.com/193559.html

Out of all the translations I've seen for the **Reverse** novels, I've never seen **Vol 1: Chapter 3** done or completed so it was entirely legible. So I decided to tackle that.

"Bak Chan's Capriccio" is Bak-chan's debut story, way before he made an appearance in the manga.

It features Bak-chan's amusing shenanigans as he devises a special 'truth-telling tea' in order to make Komui spill the beans on how he achieved the post of Head Officer, and tells us the origin of the potion that gave Allen pretty long hair in recent chapters.

If you have any comments, suggestions, or critiques concerning the translation, please feel free to let me know. My translation is certainly not the best, but since the novels aren't the most well written texts I tried to fill in the blanks so the conversations flowed relatively smoothly in english.

D.Gray-man Reverse 1, Chapter 3
by Kizaki Kaya

Bak Chan's Capriccio

The man who looked back in the mirror had eyes that were sharp and intelligent.

His blonde hair was cropped short and his grey eyes looked almost transparent. Although his features were like that of a Chinese man, the colour of his hair and eyes resembled those of Westerners, giving him a mysterious appearance.

The Black Order's Asian Branch, nicknamed the 'House of the Holy Spirit', is headed by me, Bak Chan, the illustrious Branch Director.

Today is the day.

Ah, I nearly forgot my hat.

When dressed like this, with the Rose Cross emblazoned over the left side of my uniform, wearing this hat with its long tassle, how can anyone not sense the dignity that I emit?
Indeed, I am in a fine mood.

The door I opened led to a wide corridor within this castle, which seemed even more expansive before my eyes. Flanked by huge pillars on both sides, the sight is always a magnificent spectacle.

This is the headquarters of the Black Order, which I have visited ever since I was a child. You could even say it is like a second home to me. This castle should be mine! I will take it back!

But there is someone obstructing me on my glorious path.

The despicable Komui Lee.

He is also Chinese and the same age as me. He wears glasses to put on airs, yet he is always acting frivolously and spacing out.

When he first entered the Order I didn't take notice of his presence at all. Just because his sister is an Exorcist he is treated like he has some special lineage, when in reality there is nothing striking about his personal history. He is just an ordinary Chinese man.

However, one thing led to another and somehow, Komui rose to the rank of Head Officer. The Black Order, with the Grand Generals at its head, is split into two main factions: the Active Services with the Generals and the Exorcists, and the Support Services with the Science and Intelligence departments, amongst others, including the various overseas branches.

The Head Officer is the chief of the Support Services, selected from the various Section Chiefs and Branch Directors. When Komui was appointed Head Officer I seriously had my doubts.

He came from the Innocence Research Group and his achievements can't be contested. But when it comes to the number of breakthroughs and actual results in other fields, there is no doubt that I am the victor.

That's right. Undoubtedly, the person who should have been appointed as Head Officer ought to have been me!

I am the direct descendant of the German magician who was one of the founders of the Black Order. I have received advance-level education from a young age and excelled in all of my studies and matters of intellect!

And yet...why...why was Komui chosen instead of me!?

I'm sure he must have had some secret manoeuvre! There is no other way!

'Thank you for all your hard work, Branch Director Bak.' A passing organization member bowed respectfully. He was wearing a white uniform with a hood so he must have been one of the Finders. 'There is a general meeting tomorrow so your arrival from such a distant place is always appreciated.'

'Oh that. I was on a return trip to mid-Asia so visiting Europe once a month or so is no problem.'

'I wouldn't have expected anything less!' The Finder's eyes filled with respect. 'Speaking of which, the herbal medicine that was sent from the Asia Branch has been really popular. It didn't produce any drowsiness or side-effects at all so we've treasured it.'

'Ah, that was something that my great-grandfather compounded. The Asia Branch has been using it widely ever since. I wondered if it would be alright, sending it off to headquarters, but it is seems to have had the desired effect I expected as such.'

'Is that right? Your family must have come from a notable line, Branch Director Bak, to have so many generations of talents.'

'It should be, because on top of that, my clan's – '

Just then something crashed into my back. Looking back, offended, my gaze clashed with a pair of jet black eyes.

'You're in the way.'

Standing there was a young man wearing a black uniform, a good looking orient with long, black hair tied up once at the back in a unique hairstyle.

It was the Exorcist Yu Kanda.

How dare he, knocking into me and looking so self-important!

No, this isn't the best time to say that!

He is slender with delicate features, but he is the most brutal amongst the militant Exorcists, having the shortest temper. In addition to that he is wielding a katana, his anti-akuma weapon. In the event that he is not able to keep his temper he is quick at drawing swords.

It would be wise to keep out of danger. I have no intention of being concerned with that rude fellow. First of all, I am rather busy right now and my time is too precious to waste on people like him!

Hmph!

I turned, erasing Kanda from my field of vision. The Finder observed the situation worriedly.

'Well, I must hurry off. Please continue to do a good job.'

'Of course!' The Finder bowed gratefully.

Alright, now where has Wong? I couldn't find him, even after surveying the corridor.

Just when he needs to hear about this –

'Ah, good morning!'

This sweet voice, singing like a canary in a spring meadow –

'Lenalee-san!'

Turning around, I saw that Lenalee was indeed there.

Radiating a blue tinge, her glossy black hair was, as always, tied back in its lively twin-tails. Those beautiful obsidian eyes – ah, in the face of your smile even a goddess from heaven would truly escape in bare feet.

Lenalee's greeting is followed by an energized gait, her slender legs extending from the miniskirt of her uniform.

I unintentionally, breathlessly admired her.

Ah, beautiful, noble Lenalee, it is unbelievably hard to believe that she is Komui's sister.

When I first learnt the truth, the shock I received was similar to receiving the fitful crush of one's head against a wall. Indeed, there was a seemingly imminent danger of cerebral concussion when –

Huh? The back of my hand itches. Aren't those red rashes?

It can't be the hives again?

I break out whenever I experience emotional stress. It is agony for an heir of such ingenious talent.

This is bad. Don't dwell too deeply on that. Distress will just call for a reoccurrence of hives all over the body!

Still, it itches! Ah, the skin will tear if they break! Bear with it!

Regardless of being Komui's sister, Lenalee's magnificence is undeniable.

However, that fellow is constantly hovering after her. There is a rumour that the only way to awaken a sleeping Komui is to say "Lenalee is getting married".

I can't believe it...having a sister-complex at his age.

Why is that guy always hindering me? Just thinking about it makes me angry.

Even now, punching a wall will not appease my frustration.

Whoa!

'It hurts!'

I was unable to do anything but hop about as the intense pain shot straight to the top of my head. This solid stone wall will taste the revenge of resistant fists!

'A-Are you alright, Bak-sama!?'

A Chinese man came up at a vigorously tremendous run. It was Wong. Wong is a member of the Asia Branch, but he also works as my assistant.

'Hm, it's not anything serious.'

'Aah, isn't it turning red!?'

'Shut up! It's fine!'

In his earnest, Wong was wearing an anxious and inclined expression. Wong served the Chan household for many

years before resigning to become a subordinate, namely as my own personal servant of sorts.

‘More importantly, do you have it?’

‘Yes, it arrived right on time. I came to make a report on it.’

‘Ho ho –’ Unbidden, I smirked spontaneously. This plan would be best if it was coordinated to work at the last minute before the general meeting starts.

‘We are in public view here, but this reference room would suffice.’ Wong entered a nearby room. He deftly patrolled once around the area, which had rows of shelves housing variously arranged documents.

‘There seems to be nobody else in here. Bak-sama this is the “tea of truth”. Please.’ Wong reverentially unveiled a cylinder wondrously carved with the portrait of a dragon.

Ooh...so the tea is finally done.

I lifted the lid. There were three teabags within.

‘Is that all?’

‘Yes. Unfortunately there were insufficient ingredients.’

‘Hmm... never mind.’

Only Komui has to drink it. Three teabags are more than enough.

‘Heh heh...Komui you had better look out.’

The Science Department is nothing. My illustrious self is of German magicians and Chinese lineage, the mystery of the east and west inherited within this body.

There is no losing to the likes of Komui.

Just wait and see.

‘Heh heh heh.’

This is the Chan clan’s secret medicinal recipe, handed down for generations. The addition of a rare plant recently discovered in the hinterlands of China has single-handedly led to the exploitation of this tea.

After drinking it, a person’s carefully concealed secrets will be truthfully and willingly recited. So to speak, it incites confession. There are no side-effects or abnormalities caused to the body.

And apart from unknowingly drinking it, thinking it is just ordinary tea, there is completely no evidence left behind.

Thus it is named the “tea of truth”.

Ha ha, with Komui’s weakness within my grasp, the stage will be set for his dethronement!

This is perfect, all the Branch Directors worldwide will gather here tomorrow to assemble for the general meeting. Then and there, Komui’s quirks will be revealed.

Then, soiled by humiliation, Komui will leave his rank. Simply leaving a fellow like him to handle the responsibilities of the Head Officer just won’t do.

I am looking forward to this!

‘...Bak-sama, the teabags may break if you grasp them too tightly,’ Wong said nervously.

‘Ah, that’s right.’ Those teabags are priceless. They should be handled with care. I returned the teabags to the container. There were only three of them after all.

‘Just so you know...the effects will not last over ten minutes from the time the tea is taken.’

‘Just ten minutes?’

‘Yes. Due to the high importance stressed on the time this had to be readily made, it meant the span of the effect decreased considerably. But there is an intention to reform that in the near future.’

...I suppose it can’t be helped since it is a prototype.

‘But in exchange of that, its efficacy is very rapid. Assuming individual differences, once consumed, an estimated ten to thirty seconds is all that is needed for the effect to take place. When the medicine is in effect the face will turn red and it will cause feelings of liberty and light-headedness.’

‘So that’s it. It’s similar to the sensation of being drunk. And to top it all off it has an efficacy rate of up to thirty seconds...that’s fast.’

‘It is worthy of awe.'

‘Alright, hurry with the preparations for the tea. We’ll head for the cafeteria.’

‘Yes sir!’

It might be because it’s noon, but the cafeteria was flocked with people.

But Komui is not in sight. Whatever, there will always be places that fellow is not necessarily at. I’ll find him soon enough.

At the counter I noticed that the Finder I had encountered this morning was standing in queue.

‘Ah, Branch Director Bak, are you here to have a meal too?’

‘No, I’m just here to take care of some business.’

Respectfully, Wong opened a door at the nook of the counter.

However upon the moment I entered the kitchen, a tall and muscular man appeared. His long hair, bundled into two parts, swayed. It was that chef Jerry. Even though he has a good physique, his okama language is disgusting. It’s unbearable to think that Komui is on such good terms with him.

Jerry peered at me with a smile.

‘Ohh my Bak-chan, long time no see~. Entering the kitchen like this, is there something you have to do?’

‘Shut up.’ I had no intention of speaking upfront to such a strange, twisted person. We must press forward.

Then, with Jerry leading the way, the cooks formed a barrier in front of us.

‘Wh-What!’

This guy, even though he is an okama, has a tall, masculine build. Standing there at the front, he looked truly intimidating.

‘Just a minute! This place is our sacred precinct! It would be troublesome if you were to just casually waltz in here!’

‘Wha...isn’t this just a kitchen?’

Really, a chef like that saying such things! Unbelievable!

‘Oh my, ok I’ll tell you then. Don’t all the workers in the organization take their meals here? What do you plan to do if something happens?!’

‘Don’t say it like I’m bacteria or something!’

‘There is always a one in ten thousand chance! Anyway, what in the world does the Branch Director of the Asia Branch have to do in the kitchen?’ Jerry glared sharply. Even though he was wearing sunglasses, the intensity of his excessive glare was rather striking.

‘No, I just thought of preparing some tea...’

‘Tea? What kind of tea?’ Jerry queried doubtfully.

‘Chinese tea. Taking it is good for the body. Now hand over the cups and pot.’

‘Oh well, if that’s all, why didn’t you just say so in the first place? Here, take these.’

Jerry nimbly handed over some white cups and a matching pot from a cupboard.

This okama is such a chatterbox!

I lifted the lid of the pot and placed a teabag inside. Alright, now all that was left was to figure out how much water to boil and then everything would be fine.

Jerry approached with a kettle and unexpectedly, poured boiling water into the pot.

‘Wa –! What are you doing?!’

‘Adding the hot water, what else~?’

‘Don’t do things like that of your own accord! H-h-hot!’ The kettle was scalding. I hastily drew my hand back.

‘Well, isn’t that dangerous!’ Jerry continued filling the pot with boiling water. ‘There seems to be quite a bit. Enough for five servings or so.’

‘Wha –What are you trying to do!?’

The other cooks hastily crowded around, wearing looks of great interest.

‘Ooh, is this Chinese tea?

‘Right. After going through such pains, the least you could do is let us sample it.’ Jerry swiftly filled the five cups with tea.

‘Aaah!’

‘Stop it!’ Wong reached desperately for the cups, but due to their differences in stature, he could not seize them. But on that subject, it was rumoured that Jerry practices some form of martial arts. And judging from his build he isn’t an amateur.

‘That looks interesting~. What is everybody doing?’ The Finder from earlier on called out delightedly from across the counter.

‘Bak-chan brought some Chinese tea. Would you like some?’

‘Who are you to decide –!’

‘Thank you very much!’ The Finder took a cup and drained it instantly.

‘Aaah!’ Wong groaned desperately. I suddenly wished that I could cry out too.

‘Here you two, drink up!’ Jerry handed out the cups.

‘No, no thanks, I’m fine. Since I brought this for everyone...’ I exchanged a look with Wong, glaring while still managing to look restrained.

It might look suspicious if they refused to drink it then and there.

– you drink it!

He is without a doubt an accomplice that has stood by me for a near thirty years. Wong drank the tea wearing an expression of a prisoner who had just received the verdict of a death penalty.

‘Hmm, then I’ll have Bak-chan’s serving.’ Jerry drank the tea at once. A couple of nearby cooks drank from the remaining two cups.

The plan is ruined!

I had the sudden urge to turn the table over and just let everything fall off!

N-No, get a grip!

Rather than allowing the real target to take the drink without preparation, isn’t it better to ascertain the tea’s efficacy on these fellows first?

I have to think positive!

Oh, the Finder’s face has just become faintly red. Ooh, Wong and the cooks too.

Is this where it begins to take effect?

Jerry exhaled deeply. ‘Oh my, I feel somewhat peculiar but it’s still alright. Uhn, feels warm. Maybe it causes a perspiration effect. Is this good for the health?’

‘Somewhat.’

Jerry will never change. Let’s try any enquiry.

‘About that – ’

‘A-About what, Jerry...?’

He had spoken up first. ‘I’ve been thinking about this since the beginning – the way you wear that hat, it really makes you look like a student.’

‘Wh – Wha –What?!’

Such rudeness! I’m already twenty-nine years old!

‘Ah, that...I thought that too –’ A nearby cook with blonde hair nodded as if deep in thought. His face was flushed too. ‘And with that thin tassle at the back, if I look closely, you look cute with that face – ’

‘Th –This...!’ I gritted my teeth just thinking about it. An evidently younger fellow of lower social standing than myself saying such things!

The blonde cook’s face stiffened. ‘H-Huh, this is weird...I – Why am I saying such things? S-Sorry, Branch Director Bak.’

‘So are you concealing baldness or something under that hat?’ Another cook with black hair asked with keen interest.

‘Wh-Who’s bald?!’

‘Argh, sorry. But I’ve always thought from the start that your hair seemed thin even for your young age...uwaaah, why am I saying such tactless things again!’ The black haired cook desperately clapped his hands over his mouth. His face was crimson.

...Huh, so that’s how it is. These fellows were suddenly recalling their secretive chats.

‘Don’t – Don’t say such inconsiderate things! The quality of Bak-sama’s hair is just soft and fine!’ Wong yelled indignantly.

Ooh, so he says! But that’s Wong for you, without a doubt. He has always been good to me.

‘It’s definitely silky and neat but personally I would like for him to stop being entranced by his mirror every morning. Because of that, much time is wasted on his outfitting and I have to call him for departure many times. A general narcissist...awawawa!’ Wong clamped his mouth shut, flustered.

Ho ho....so that’s what he thinks of me.

‘Tha-That’s not it, Bak-sama, please do not stare at me with those cold eyes!’ Wong said with a desperate expression.

‘Ah, but speaking of being a narcissist, that’s about right when it comes to Branch Director Bak.’

Gripping Wong’s collar and turning around I met the Finder’s gaze.

‘Oh no, I truly think he is a great person but he, how should I say it, speaks boastfully. Especially on subjects about his clan or lineage, those talks often take a long time – since I’m quite busy during work, I wish he’d just give me the general outline.’

‘You...’ I could feel the veins twitching on my forehead.

‘Eh? Huh? I, what am I saying...Oh, I just said that Branch Director Bak is splendid. Ahahahaha!’ Laughing meaninglessly, the Finder left as if to escape.

‘Er...erm, Bak-sama...’ Wong said nervously. The redness had disappeared off his face as though it had evaporated into thin air. So that’s it then, the effectiveness does seem rather short.

‘That’s enough. Let’s go!’

‘Yes sir!’

We left the cafeteria. As we were walking down the corridor Wong spoke timidly, ‘...are you angry?’

‘No~! Thanks to that we were able to understand and judge the effectiveness of the tea and what you lot were thinking of from the pits of your stomachs! It is a great reward!’

‘...I knew he still seemed angry.’

‘I’m going to go and find Komui now. You wait in the room with your report!’

‘Yes sir...’ Wong left with drooped shoulders.

Argh, I was furious!

Who did those fellows think they were, speaking as they please!

But at least the length of the tea’s efficacy was clear now. Upon drinking it, it really makes a person chatter out their true feelings. And because of the efficacy, they did it right after drinking too. Splendid!

...still, it hadn’t been a particularly happy discussion.

I glanced at my hair.

...it’s not like its sparse or anything! My hair is just fine!

But that’s not the point here! Right now I should only be thinking of ways to get Komui to drink that tea!

‘Hey, Branch Director Bak!’ A redheaded youth with a patch over his right eye spoke light-heartedly. A black headband with dragon-like scales coiled above his forehead.

That’s Lavi. Aside from being an Exorcist he is also a Bookman – a person who records the hidden side of history – in training.

‘Did you come for the party too, Branch Director Bak?’

‘Party...? What party? I came here to attend the regular general meeting.’

‘Then, you weren’t invited?’

‘So, what kind of party is it?’

‘Who knows? I’m just going to eat the delicious food. Seeing as Komui is the organizer and all.’

Komui organized this?! That fellow, why on earth is he hosting a party of his own accord?

‘You know, rather than making a face about it, you could just ask Komui if you want to join ~.’ Lavi’s optimism passed through my head without pause.

That’s it. Even this kid was invited so how is it that I, who came all the way to headquarters, wasn’t even accounted for?

Well, I have no interest in that so-called organizer Komui’s lowly party!

‘Al~right, well seeing as there’s still some time before then, I’m going to go look up on Yu.’ Saying that, Lavi steadily walked off.

Looking at that carefree fellow’s retreating back, I felt a sudden surge of fresh irritation.

A party he said? Even with the Millennium Earl on the move and leading the world to destruction they would not feel the tension. I swear the day that I become Head Officer I will surely have those characters whipped into shape!

That’s right, starting from now the struggle for Innocence between the Black Order and the Millennium Earl will be fraught with violence until the very end. How many sacrifices will this create? Nevertheless, we must prevail over the deaths of our compatriots, because we have no choice but to fight. For the sake of protecting this world –

My great intellect exists for that very cause. It’s worrying to entrust the position of Head Officer to someone like Komui!

‘Ah, Bak-san.’

This voice of a celestial maiden. I can feel my chest rise with anticipation. I turn around and true enough, Lenalee is there, carrying bundles of documents and looking troubled.

Aah, she is lovely even like this –

‘Ah, ahh, good day to you too Lenalee-san! That looks heavy, would you like me to help you carry them?’

‘Oh, are you sure? Well, you could take half of these.’ Lenalee smiled sweetly. Somehow she is always truly cute.

She handed over half of the documents to me. Aah, it is because of her modesty that she turned down my offer to carry all of them!

‘Where are you heading?’

‘The command room. Brother requested it.’

‘Ho ho, Komui did, did he?’ A smirk spontaneously curled at the corner of my mouth.

The timing couldn’t have been any more ideal! Indeed, heaven truly favours me.

‘That’s perfect. Because I actually had some Chinese tea which is good for the health sent from home. It must be tiring doing all that work, so I would like to present it as a treat.’

‘Ah, really...? I think brother will be delighted.’

Ha ha, this is truly lucky.

Upon opening the door of the command room, the first thing I notice is that the entire floor is scattered with mountainous amounts of paperwork. Is this guy incapable of tidying up and organizing or something?

‘Brother, sorry to have kept you waiting!’ That sloppy Komui was sitting at his desk but he immediately stood up gleefully upon sighting Lenalee. Most of the time this fellow is always stays calm but in front of Lenalee his child-like tendencies to be emotional become even more blatant.

‘Aah, you’ve worked hard Lenalee. Huh? Bak-chan is here too?’

‘Hey. Long time no see, Komui.’

I told him to stop calling me Bak-chan! It is true of my name yes, but there is no sense of humour in saying it like that at all! I felt like yelling that out but stirring up a commotion now would not do any good to the plan. And I definitely wasn’t going to do anything like that in Lenalee’s presence.

There is no other way but to appear calm and composed. Just uphold an amiable countenance!

‘It’s rare for Bak-chan to come to the command room. What’s up?’ Komui’s eyes seemed to brighten behind his spectacles. Did he suspect anything? No matter what else he may be that fellow is definitely not negligent after all.

It’s fine; there is no way the beans were spilled about the tea. Just act natural.

‘The documents were heavy so I helped carry them and we came here together.’

‘Ho, such kindness.’ Komui’s tone was filled with innumerable words of malice. He seemed to be unable to stomach the idea of seeing Lenalee in my company.

This fellow really has a hardcore sister-complex. In the event of removing all guys that get close to Lenalee his eyes always light up. He really is a thoroughly depressing guy.

‘Brother, Bak-san brought a treat of Chinese tea.’

‘Thank you for that. By all means,’ the unknowing Komui said cheerfully.

Ha ha, at last the one who is in control here and now is yours truly!

‘Erm, an ordinary mug is all we have. Do you mind if the hot water is from the pot?’

‘I don’t mind at all.’

She is truly a kind and considerate woman. Lenalee poured hot water into the cup with the teabag. A cooperative atmosphere arose between the two of us. It was a good feeling. ‘Is this enough?’

‘That’s fine. Now we just have to wait for it to thicken a little bit more.’ If the efficacy is to be stronger, it would certainly need to be a denser colour than before.

Lenalee placed the mug on a tray and walked over to Komui.

Ha ha, it’s all cleverly plotted this time!

‘Ah, Chief Komui! There you are!’ A young man with light brown hair entered the room, speaking loudly. It was the Section Chief of the Science Department, Reever Wenham.

‘Ah, there’re guests! It’s been a long time Branch Director Bak.’

‘You’re looking pretty well, Reever-kun.’ Reever looked the same as he did before, with that unshaven face and wearing an untidy white coat too worn out of shape. Not even upholding a fragment of dignity. It’s no wonder he’s Komui’s subordinate.

‘Sorry, it looks like I’m interrupting,’ Reever said apologetically. His gaze settled on the tray Lenalee was carrying. ‘Ah, thanks. My throat’s parched.’

Reever deftly reached for the mug.

Id-Idiot! That’s not your tea!

Aaah, don’t blab off!

‘Why youuuuuu! What do you think you’re doing!?’

Reever let go of the mug in shock. As it fell, its contents spilled impressively, the majority splaying against Lenalee’s front.

‘Kyaaah!’

‘Lenalee!!’ An instant change in his expression, Komui hurried to the scene, more or less flying over his desk.

Reever was fiercely pushed aside. Serves him right!

Uoh! Why did he push him towards me!

Komui’s hand settled on Lenalee’s shoulder. ‘Are you alright? Ah, a burn!’

‘I...I’m alright. It’s not scalding and most of it fell on my clothes anyway.’

‘Is it not hot?’

‘It is, yes. But at least it doesn’t look like it’ll stain any further.’

So those particularly specialized uniforms actually seem to work. That’s a relief...

Nearby, Reever let out a thankful sigh.

‘Anyway, you should hurry and put on a change of clothes. And it’d be better if you went to the medical ward for some attention afterwards as well.’ Embracing Lenalee’s shoulder, Komui turned our way.

‘Reever-kun...’ That icy look sent a chill up Reever’s spine, not to mention my own.

‘Yes, I’m very sorry! That was inexcusable! I’ll be cautious in the future so such a thing does not happen again!’ Reever kneeled down and bowed vigorously.

‘I hope you keep to that promise, at any cost.’ Saying that, Komui and Lenalee disappeared out the door.

‘A – ah.’ At the same time Reever let out a sigh of relief. ‘Hm? Ah Branch Director Bak, about just now, you shouted so loudly...is something wrong?’

‘Eh? No, it’s nothing!’

Everything was ruined because of this idiot...

‘Oh, well I guess that’s all well and good but seriously, you scared me.’

Huh? What’s with that lifeless voice?

Reever’s face was flushed a slight pink. That means the tea must be in effect.

‘Really, that guy leads an existence that revolves entirely around Lenalee. I think it’s considerably shortened his lifespan.’

‘...About that. Is Lenalee socializing with a man by any chance?’

This is my opportunity to reaffirm the situation. Reever should know plenty seeing as he is by Komui and Lenalee’s sides every day.

‘There is no way that’s possible. Even if there was, Komui would consign them to total oblivion. The guys that have intentions for Lenalee can’t even get close to her in the first place.’

Is that so...while it is elating to know that there is no lover involved, still, Komui's existence is truly a bother.

Reever stared at me with fixed eyes.

'Wha-What is it?'

'Er, nah it's nothing...since Branch Director Bak is always wearing a hat, is it really bald underneath?'

'Hah...?'

Reever's face paled rapidly. 'Ah, this is bad, what am I saying! Blurting something so secret. Sorry, I didn't realize! See you later then!'

Reever left the command room in an attempt to escape.

What is that fellow saying? I'm really not bald at all!

But what secret was he talking about? Someone must have inspired that lie!

Well, putting that aside, the number of teabags is down to one! There is no room for any more failures.

Tch...Now what do I do?

Komui's voice accompanied the creak of the door. 'Oh, you're still here?' He entered the command room alone.

'....ah, yeah. How's Lenalee-san?'

'If I tried to help her change clothes, I'd get kicked to death...you're so mean, Lenalee. I was seriously worried.' Komui seemed to hang his head in grief.

Th-This pervert! With a fellow like this for a brother, there is no doubt that Lenalee is often troubled.

'Alright, time to continue working. It'll be better if I can finish this off quickly.' Komui sat at the desk, piled high with a mountain of books.

Huh? There are only the two of us in the command room. Isn't this a chance?

I will finally get to hear Komui's motives without interference!

Careless, and without a hint of anything out of the ordinary, I spoke nonchalantly, 'That's troublesome. Ok, I'll prepare tea then. Since Reever drank that other one just now. This'll astonish you even though you're feeling tired.'

Ooh, that was good, if I do say so myself.

'Aah, thank you.'

Komui doesn't seem to suspect anything.

I put the last teabag into the cup. Alright, just do it!

In goes the boiled water. Ok, I think it's time for some idle chitchat while making the tea.

'How's your work?'

'Un...it's busy,' Komui answered while eyeing the documents.

'Being in the Head Officer position and supervising the Order's Support Services...that must be a good thing from where you stand. Didn't you want to devote more time to your researching?'

This idiot really has an affinity for worthless research projects.

'Aah, it's truly a heavy responsibility. There is much to worry about, especially when it comes to the routine tasks. Even so, those are the things that are most worth doing.'
An answer without slip-ups. So, as I predicted, he was coming at me with a full-frontal attack.

Ok, time to serve the tea.

‘It might taste a little unpleasant...’

‘Aah, its fine. I’m accustomed to drinking tea.’ Komui took the cup I held out to him.

Now, at last!

I could feel my heart rate rising!

But Komui, whilst holding the cup, did not lift it quite all the way to his mouth.

‘Is there something wrong?’ Don’t tell me...he realized it?

My palms were soaking with perspiration.

Komui smiled playfully. ‘Nooo, it's just difficult to drink when you're staring at me like that - '

‘Aah, I guess so.’ Alright then, in the meantime I’ll just face sideways.

‘Puhwaa! This is good. Even if it is a little bitter.’ Komui set the cup down.

Ooh, the cup is completely empty. He drained it down to the very last drop.

‘Thank you for doing this.’

‘No, I didn’t do anything.’ This tea should have been denser than what Jerry and the others had taken. That is to say, soon –

‘Uhn, this is a really neat feeling. How should I say it...my heart feels lighter.’

‘Ah, is that right?’ Komui’s face turned red. Yes! This is the effect!

‘Back to our earlier discussion, the work that comes with being Head Officer must really be a heavy burden for you.’

‘Uhn, there’s no such thing~. Besides, research funds can be increased under the Head Officer’s authority too~. Ah, but that’s a secret~. Well, actually it’s something that everyone knows~.

Th-This idiot! Isn’t that an abuse of authority!?

But there is a beneficial side to his research. He must be resisting. He hasn’t said anything about his weakness. Ok then, I’ll just have to find out his real motives for becoming Head Officer!

‘You becoming the Head Officer...was that really due to the recognition you earned given your research on the Innocence?’

There, how do you like that! Now tell me the truth! What kind of sneaky, underhanded means did you use?

‘About that, since the Innocence has become the key to battle I think that there was more consideration to choose someone who specialized in the knowledge of its field like I did,’ Komui answered readily.

Tch, that didn’t work either. Maybe there should be more to the question.

Anything, anything –

‘...um, what do you think of me?’ I found the words coming out inadvertently.

That’s right; this is probably what I wanted to question the most.

Komui, who always conceals his true intentions behind that smiling façade....I wonder what kind of response he’ll give.

My heart was beating intensely.

Komui responded with ease, '...everyone recognizes your strength.'

'Eh...?'

'In addition to that you've been gifted with natural talent from birth, with advanced knowledge and experience since childhood. That is a circumstance that no ordinary person can obtain. You're really something. Though I'm the Head Officer now, I have no idea how that came to be. But when it did happen, at that time I just wanted to leave everything to you.'

For him to say such unexpected words – well no, not that unexpected considering that my excellence is indeed a fact – but still, for a minute there I was simply astonished. There is no possible way that Komui had just said all that and meant it.

But he had and there was no doubting it because he had taken the "tea of truth".

'Do you think its right for me to be the Head Officer?' Komui smiled cheerfully.

'Yeah, we'll be counting on you.' The blunder was heart-rending.

No, it's certainly true what he said earlier. I am far superior in both wit and lineage because of my excellence!

But no, this isn't about that. I should hurry and get Komui to confess his weakness!
Komui sat down and peered in my direction.

Wh-What?

'Speaking of you, why are you on such good relations with Lenalee?'

'Er...' On good relations? Does he have something to say about me and Lenalee-san?

'Just now, I was thinking about the both of you coming into the command room together, and then the two of you went ahead and flirtingly prepared tea together. Right in front of my eyes...'

Komui's expression held enormous resent. 'I'll say this, even if I have my eyes covered, you'd better not lay a single finger on Lenalee.'

'Wh-What are you saying! Isn't it Lenalee-san's freedom to love?'

'Love!?' Komui's voice turned inside out. 'Lenalee is in love!?' He stood up as if someone had kicked the chair over.

'Ca-Calm down, Komui! That was just an allegory...'

'Aaaaaaaaaaugh!' Komui abruptly pulled a large machine gun out from under the desk.

Wh-Why is something like that placed there?!

'Already – this, this is my end-! If Lenalee disappears –!'

'Don't-Don't get so unhinged over this!'

'I'll kill everybody and die!'

'Die alone –!!'

I seized the machine gun in an attempt to steal it away from him, but the arm I managed to throw over it was quickly shaken away.

Then, the muzzle started the spout flames.

Terrible explosive noises resounded throughout the room.

This is bad!

In-In the mean time I'll just crawl forward. Ch, the papers scattered across the floor are a hindrance!

Shells flew past overhead, the sound of collapsing books and documents ringing in my ears.

There was no way I was turning back!

After struggling to reach the door I exited the room with a gasp.

'Ahahahahahahahahahaha!!' I left Komui's elated voice somewhere far behind.

As I left the corridor I suddenly broke out into a cold sweat. I couldn't continue standing for much longer.

Aah, such a thing it was to finally grasp Komui's weakness, knowing that it had its ways and means of getting you killed.

My heart continued to throb violently.

Ugh, the plan was a failure...I think I'm going to return to my room now to get some sleep.

'Ah, there you are Bak-san!' Lenalee hurried from the corridor.

At that moment, energy surged from the bottom of my heart.

'Lenalee-san! Is your burn alright?'

'Yes. Ah, I'm sorry, the tea which you took such a great effort to...'

'No, it's fine.'

Yes, it really doesn't matter now. That useless tea!

'I want to apologize to you. Can you come to the kitchen now?'

'Ah...of course!'

With you, I'd go anywhere!

Walking next to Lenalee. Just doing that feels akin to being whirled up in the heavens.

But that short moment of being the happiest person in the world ends in an instant.

When we arrived at the cafeteria, Lenalee opened the door. 'Here, please go in.'

At the moment I stepped foot into that place there was a sudden shout of joy.

I stiffened.

The cafeteria was adorned with flashy decorations, clamouring with the organization members gathered there.

'Branch Director Bak, congratulations on your birthday –!' They shouted in unison.

What is this? I don't think I was quite grasping the situation here.

'Ah, you're really surprised aren't you?' Lenalee smiled pleasantly nearby. 'You looked unhappy recently, so brother suggested having a surprise birthday party.'

'What is the man of the moment doing? Don't just stand there. Quickly now, please hurry to the centre!'

I found myself being pushed on all sides by organization members, forwarded towards the centre of the cafeteria.

En route, I spotted Wong's face in the crowd.

‘Ba-Bak-sama!’

‘Wong, did you know about this?’

‘No, I was caught completely by surprise too! I was abruptly led to the cafeteria just a little while ago!’ A flustered Wong was soon swallowed by the surging crowd.

A humongous cake lay on the table, conscientiously written with the words “Happy Birthday Bak-chan!’

‘Well then, I’ll put up the candles!’ Jerry was grasping the candles tightly. ‘You know, just now when you entered the kitchen everyone was so fearful that you’d discover the cake!’

‘That –’

‘I’ll pass around the champagne glasses to everyone~. Here Bak-chan you have one too!’

‘My birthday is on the 11th of November.’ Somehow I found enough sense to say that.

Jerry stopped his movements, still holding on to a champagne glass. ‘Eh?’

The entire cafeteria fell into silence, as if it had just been struck by a flood.

Then suddenly everyone stirred.

‘What’s the date today?’

‘Isn’t it the 4th of January?’

‘Hey – Sorry I kept everyone waiting! But all that work is finally settled~.’ Everyone turned their eyes towards a tottering Komui as he came into sight.

‘Eh? What?’

‘Chief Komui! You got Branch Director Bak’s birthday all wrong!’

‘Eeh...? That’s strange. I thought for sure that it was on the 4th of January...’

‘No it’s the 11th of November!’

Mindless of my rage, Komui smiled frivolously. ‘Ah, wasn’t it the day that had four of 1? Guess I had it all wrong.’

This is infuriating. It is true that my birthday has four 1’s. It is the “Number One in Everything!” day...

‘Brother...’

‘Chief Komui...’

Pinned under the cold stares of everyone in the room, Komui waved his hands, flustered.

‘But-But it’s alright isn’t it? Why don’t we just make this a dry run of the birthday party! Th-There everyone, why don’t we finish passing the glasses around and raise a toast, eh?’

At that, the organization members raised their glasses, all wearing similar expressions of reluctant consent.

‘Well then, to the esteemed Branch Director Bak’s birthday, and not, to the numerous day-to-day achievements we make here, cheers –!’

‘Cheers –!’

The organization members hoisted their glasses towards me. For now, I responded with a smile and self-control.

I swear that Komui is unbelievable sometimes.

‘Bak-san!’ Lenalee came up to my side. ‘We are so sorry. To have everyone get your birthday wrong, you must feel

awful.'

'N-No, well, it does feel elating to have a reason to celebrate.'

Lenalee brightened up considerably after I said that. 'That's a relief. Bak-san you are such a big-hearted person. Even if you don't feel bad I hope you will forgive us.'

'Hey, don't idle around! Eat the cake, the cake! It was made for you after all!' Jerry handed me a slice of the cake he had cut.

'Ah, yes...'

This crowd of assembled order members gathered together because of a party that was prepared in my honour.

There was a misunderstanding, but that doesn't matter.

As expected, I am a figure of popularity.

Of course, just as that moment Komui and his colleagues came up to me.

'Actually, we have a present that the entire Science Department prepared for you. Please accept it.' He handed me a box adorned with a ribbon.

'Tha-Thank you...'

A present for me? What on earth could it be?

I untied the ribbon and opened the box. For some reason or another, it was a bottle.

With 'Epoch-Making Hair Tonic' written on the label.

'Wha-Whaa...'

'Ohh Bak-chan you just seemed so concerned about it! You look in the mirror every so often to check your hair or the angle of your hat don't you? See, that's where the Science Department's cue comes in –' Komui said cheerfully.

Th-This guy...! Without a doubt he is the perpetrator behind that mortifying, unfounded rumour that my illustrious self is bald!

'Make sure you use it ok? The results are fairly instantaneous~.'

In the face of that full, sunny smile the most I could do was give a stiff smile of my own in return.

Reever slipped in close to me. 'We really slaved till we dropped to develop this tonic. Especially me, it is extremely heart-breaking to even think about it...so please use it!'

The results of this investigation had obviously not yet been ascertained, judging by the anxious glints shining in every eye of the Science Department.

In all honesty, it was somewhat disturbing.

I really had no intention of ever using it, but it was hard to decline while being stared at with those anticipating eyes.

'...it's alright isn't it? This tonic.'

'Of course it is! Section Chief Reever was personally the experimental material!'

Well if that was the case, then I guess using it just the once should be fine.

–If it really works I'd probably be drawing more attention in due course.

No, what am I thinking of!

As I took off my hat a rustling stirred up amongst the crowd.

‘Ah, he isn’t bald.’

‘But his hair is thin...isn’t it?’

You people might be trying to whisper in low voices, but I can still hear you, you know!

Ugh, this is unpleasant. Time to end it quickly.

I held the mouth of the bottle above my scalp. There was a trickling sensation of cool liquid.

‘....that’s all isn’t it?

The moment I said it, something began swirling over the top of my head. It felt as if my hair was being drawn out of its own accord.

‘Aaaaahh!’ The organization members cried out in shock.

Suddenly there was a strange sound, like something had begun stretching rather quickly.

With that sound my hair began growing and stretching rapidly!

And the growth didn’t stop until it was about level with my chest.

‘What-What is this about –?!’

‘So it’s as we expected.’ The entire Science Department clapped their hands together.

‘Expected...?’

Reever let out a sigh. ‘Somehow, the results are always strong but short-lived. It grew in an instant, but the effect won’t last over approximately twenty-four hours...incidentally, until that time, no matter how you cut it, it will probably grow back to the same length it is now,’ he added with a tone of sympathy. However his mouth was quivering with the effort to endure his urge to laugh.

Up to twenty-four hours? That means attending tomorrow’s general meeting with this hair –

‘Heeey, it’s good to have long hair. Still, there is much room for improvement. See, nobody has tested it since Section Chief Reever. So yeaaah – you were a great help!’ Komui patted my shoulder.

‘Wha – Wha, Wha, Wha, Wha – ’

Calling it a birthday present...isn’t this just an experiment?

What kind of treatment is this?! Did I really do something so vile to you as to deserve this?

I thought about it. And there was only a single thing that came to mind.

– could it be that somehow Komui realized about the tea...?

Komui smiled cheerfully. ‘Even though this tonic has its merits for being instantaneous, the duration of its effectiveness is so short that it’s practically useless.’

Everything from his tone to his eyes seemed aimed at observing my reaction.

– was the situation about the tea really leaked?

No, there is no way.

– But...

Before, everyone who drank the tea had gone pale after voicing their true thoughts because they realized they had made an unwitting verbal slip-up. But when Komui drank the tea, he didn’t...

The presence of a smile was still evident on Komui’s face. It would have been impossible to guess what he was thinking.

But this guy, he displays his sobriety with bouts of reckless violence. So there can be no way, no way that this guy seriously meant what he said –

‘Aah, that’s true. So until it proves to be practical, serious improvements must be made.’ For now, I’ll just return an amiable response.

Damn it, I shouldn’t even be feeling slightly inspired by Komui’s words! What’s wrong with me?

Listen up Komui! A tolerant smile may be fixed on my face but my soul is burning!

Creating such an idiotic tonic like that!

Why on earth is this experiment geek the Head Officer? It is truly incomprehensible!

One day, without a doubt, I will make you cringe before me!

So until then you just continue waiting cheerfully!

Komui!

THE END

Notes: ~~And so after I finished this Komui/Bak became my crackOTP.~~ I'm surprised no one did a full, understandable translation of this story before. I certainly thought it was a lot of fun! But then I find Bak-chan as awesome as he says he is so... XD Though his apparent ~~pedolust~~ crush on Lenalee was sort of disturbing. Perhaps he has a lolita-complex? BD; Oh Bak...

In case some people didn't get Komui's mix up with Bak-chan's birthday: Bak-chan's birthday is 11/11, the 11th of November, the day that is is "No. 1 in everything!' haha oh Bak. XD But Komui mistook the fact that 'there are four 1's' in the date for 'the date is the fourth of 1'. In other words, 4/1, the 4th of January. XD Hope that made sense.

As for the hair tonic...'epoch-making' means the hair tonic was a significant breakthrough marking a new beginning in the history of hair tonics to come. XD Poor Bak-chan, I'm sure he looks quite pretty with long hair. :>